

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides an OAM tool that enables a network operator to verify the path that an Ethernet frame traverses through bridges in a bridged Ethernet LAN. Verification is performed using a mechanism to ping the path a frame will traverse. An Ethernet path verification message (Eping message) is sent in the data path, the message having a new EtherType that identifies it as a path verification message. The method verifies the data path that frames actually take, rather than determining the data path that frames should take as is done by prior art methods that utilize the control plane for path determination.